



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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minutes 12-12-2006

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2006

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
Kathy Fennelly
Sean Garballey
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
CFO Sue Mazzarella
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Rep.: Ella Harenian

Call to order: 7:35

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

CONSENT AGENDA – all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*Approval of Warrant # 07072 in the amount of \$659,270.79

*2nd reading of Policy KAA School-Community-Home Communications

*2nd reading of Policy DI Fiscal Accounting & Reporting

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was
Voted to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

NO PLACE FOR HATE

Lt. Kenneth Hughes, Community Service Officer of the Arlington Police, explained to the Committee the No Place for Hate Program and its goals. The Anti-defamation League in conjunction with the Massachusetts Municipal Association created it. Lt. Hughes stated that the Arlington Police Department believes that this would be beneficial to the Arlington Community and requested the support of the School Committee and Supt. Levenson. Lt. Hughes has met with and has the support of the Board of Selectmen, the Metco Program and other boards in Town.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded it was unanimously:
Voted that the Arlington School Committee expresses its desire to the Town to become a participant of the No Place for Hate Program.

Next steps include a Coalition meeting on January 9th with Town officials and representatives from the Anti-Defamation League. The Town must then sign a public proclamation and complete three community projects before becoming certified.

LEADER BANK/BOWES REAL ESTATE PRESENTATION

Leader Bank President, Sushil Tuli, along with Jay Tuli and owner of Bower Real Estate, Robert Bowes presented an expansion of their current partnership program with the Hardy School to extend to all of the elementary schools. When school employees and families do business with either company, the partnership with Leader Bank and Bowes Real Estate provides incentive programs and funds for the schools as well as educational seminars such as interview preparation and credit card safety for students, and affordable lending programs and first time buyers workshop.

Supt. Levenson was in support of the partnership and recommended that the Arlington Public Schools endorse the program pointing out that it supports the goal of attracting and retaining staff in the district.

The Community Relations Subcommittee reviewed the proposal last spring to ensure that it was in compliance with existing policies; there were no conflicts found.

The initiatives to the 6 other elementary schools will take place during January and February with participation at the middle school and high school tentatively to begin in the fall.

ELL UPDATE

Jill McCarthy, ELL program Director, gave an update on the goals for ELL Program Implementation for the 2006-2007 school year. Program development activities related to the district goal of implementation of the 3-leveled ELL program are on-going, both to attain/maintain compliance and to meet our own goal of an effective ELL program aligned to the unique aspects of the district.

Ms. McCarthy acknowledged and thanked the World Language Network Family partnership for their support of the ELL program and the dissemination of the program goals and activities to families and the community.

EXPANDED COLLEGE SUPPORT

Lynna Williams, AHS Lead College Guidance Counselor and AHS principal, Charles Skidmore reported on the new structure and improvements in the guidance department. As the college admissions process has changed over the years, many colleges have seen a drastic increase in the number of students applying to their college and students are applying to a greater number of colleges much earlier than in previous years. This does have a negative affect on students in terms of: higher stress among students and parents, more competition, increased paperwork for students, guidance counselors and teachers due to the higher number of students applying to mores colleges. This increases the need to help students with organizing, processing, sorting information and completing paperwork.

Ms. Williams explained that the guidance department has focused on streamlining the process for students by:

- .. Increased communication with parents via email.
- .. A new and updated website.
- .. A revised senior packet for students spelling out the various steps in the process.
- .. Use of the computer program Naviance that will help students and counselors with the college admissions process.
- .. A financial aid night with MEFA
- .. College Fair scheduled for the April 10th.

Mr. Skidmore and Ms. Williams stated that the goal of the guidance department is to provide services that benefit all students and that they will continue to look for ways to improve and to continue to make the process easier for all students.

RINK UPDATE

John Hurd, John Bilafer, Cindy Curran and Steve Decourcey addressed the committee relative to the Ed Burns Athletic Center reviewing the objectives, purpose and next steps of the plan.

The Objective: to form a public/private partnership with the School Committee, Superintendent and Town to explore the possibility of building a privately funded Sports facility on the Arlington High School campus and named in honor of Ed Burns former Arlington High School Teacher, Athletic Director, football coach and 50-year hockey coach.

The Purpose: to honor the Edward Burns legacy, to address high demand for ice rental, to incorporate a multipurpose facility, (AHS Sports Complex) and to develop a future revenue stream.

To date the Ed Burns Committee has met regularly, has established the Ed Burns 501(c) 3 Ice Arena Foundation and have raised enough funds to cover the exploratory costs including a feasibility study to determine if the structure can be built on the site adjacent to the high school. It will also develop a business plan. The goal has expanded with the hope of utilizing the facility for purposes other than ice. The Committee is requesting permission from the school committee to go forward with the feasibility study.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Fennelly it was

Voted that the Arlington School Committee grant permission to go forward with the feasibility study on the Ed Burns Athletic Center. 7-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

School Facilities Working Group

Supt. Levenson reported that the group was making a lot of progress with creating both options and recommendations for the Thompson and Stratton Schools. A full, comprehensive report will be ready for Town Meeting. After the SFWG reviews the options Nate will share them with the school committee.

Youth Health & Safety Coalition

The Superintendent stated that the coalition executive committee has been meeting regularly and has recently hired a coalition building consultant/facilitator. The consultant would like to see a little more groundwork and assessment data before moving forward too quickly. Nate acknowledged that building a true broad based, lasting coalition is a slow process.

Traffic Supervisors Update

Mr. Levenson informed the Committee that the recognition-posting period for the traffic supervisors is over and no other union has asked to represent them. The first negotiating session is being scheduled based on everyone's availability.

Chief Ryan has observed the new crossing positions as well as the existing one at the OMS to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place. The Chief is supportive of the changes.

Budget

The budget projected previously with a \$1.8 million dollar shortfall has been readjusted to \$800,000. the changes are due to the Town receiving more than anticipated revenues and the changes in health care costs recently agreed upon in the teachers contract.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Update on SC Administrative Asst.

Ms. Sheffler explained that at the last meeting the School Committee voted to hire their administrative assistant at a level 3 step 5. Since then she has learned that, that is not consistent with previous hires and not consistent with past practice and must be revisited.

Supt. Levenson pointed out that historically the confidential secretaries have followed and been paid by the bargaining rules of unit C; the rules state that within the unit a person must move up in a class by at least \$750.00. The Superintendent believed that the position should be offered at Level 3 Step 3 and although legally the committee can vote otherwise it is not in accordance with past practice.

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Moved to amend the original motion to offer the position at Call 3 step 4.

Mr. Thrope moved with a second from Mr. Garballey to:
Support the superintendent's recommendation that the position be offered at Class 3, step 3.
Motion fails, 5 no voted, 2 yes (Mr. Thrope and Mr. Garballey).

On the motion that the position of the School Committee Administrative Assistant is offered at Class 3, step 4, motion passes. 6-1 Mr. Thrope voting no, not on the individual but the deviation from past practice.

School Committee Retreat

Sue Sheffler reported that the retreat was productive, with members of the administrative cabinet attending and the committee holding a book discussion.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Accountability Subcommittee

Mr. Thielman reported that the subcommittee met on December 6th and after changes approved the Superintendent Accountability Scoring Grid.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by ms. Lovelace it was
Moved to approve the Superintendent Accountability Scoring Grid as recommended and approved by the subcommittee.

Mr. Thrope voiced concern on a number of issues on the grid: what constitutes a reasonable and professional manner, is uncomfortable with goal 5, believes that the bar is too low and stated that it is problematic that the superintendent can earn up to 10% derived from the efforts of others.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Garballey,
Moved that the superintendent's accountability scoring grid be recommitted to the subcommittee.
Motion fails 5- no, 2 yes (Mr. Thrope and Mr. Garballey).

On the original motion it was

Voted to approve the Superintendent's Accountability Scoring Grid as recommended and approved by the subcommittee. 5-2 (Mr. Thrope and Mr. Garballey with no votes).

Budget Subcommittee

Ms. Lovelace reported that the budget subcommittee is in the process of reviewing all possible revenue enhancements including rental of school space, cell tower usage, special education transportation, all day kindergarten and athletic fees. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled but Ms. Lovelace stated that the budget subcommittee plans to have a public forum on the budget at the end of January.

Policy & Procedures

Mr. Garballey reported that at its last meeting the subcommittee had a discussion on school safety and if policies and procedures were followed in response to the alleged sexual assault. Mr. Levenson and Mr. Skidmore reported on the sequence of events and how the incident was handled. It was determined by the subcommittee that policies and procedures were followed in response to the incident.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 3 at 2:30 pm.

Curriculum & Instruction

Ms. Fennelly stated the subcommittee discussed the issue of listing QPA on transcripts. Mr. Skidmore suggested a system that would list students in the 10%, 20%, etc. This would be explained in the student handbook. The subcommittee voted to change the way class rank is reported on high school transcripts from numerical rank to percentage rank. It was agreed that changes to the student handbook must come before the full committee 30 days before it goes to the printer.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman stated that the Community Relations subcommittee is scheduled to meet on Monday, December 18th at 7:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thielman requested that the teacher contract be available online upon approval.

On a motion by Mr. Fennelly and seconded it was

Voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit any new warrant articles as necessary to submit all the usual annual articles as required. 7-0

On a motion by Ms. Fennelly seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to adjourn at 11:00 PM.

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*